Men and women are two inseparable parts of human society and they have always shared sorrows and joys together. If men have endeavoured to free themselves from slavery, women have not lagged behind. But still they are not accorded the equal status to men in the society. The position and status of women varied from time to time in the different societies.

The early Vedic times of the ancient period were free from many of the social evils that harmed the Indian society in the later eras. At that time women were assigned high status in the society. But during the post-vedic period, women lost that status which she once enjoyed in society. She became a subject of protection. The period after 300 B.C. witnessed a succession of invasions and influx of foreigners such as the Greeks, the Sythians, the Parthian, the Kushans and others. The political misfortunes, the war atrocities followed by long spells of anarchy and lawlessness had disastrous effect on the society. Sons were valued higher than the daughters because of the need for fighting males in order to survive the waves of onslaught. It was imperative to protect women from abductors. It therefore became necessary to curtail women's freedom and movements. Early marriage was perhaps employed as a part of those defensive measures. The education of the girl child was no longer a priority. Shastras too
compromised by accepting marriage as a substitute for upanayanan and education. The neglect of education, imposing seclusion and insecurity that gripped their lives, had disastrous consequences upon the esteem and status of women.

During the medieval age, condition of women was again degrading. Muslim attacks made people to protect their ladies and compelled them to shut the weaker sex behind the four walls of the houses. Purdah system, polygamy, child marriage and other evils started creeping into the society which affected the condition of women. But still during that time many socio-religious movements like Sufism and Bhakti movement and the birth of Sikhism in Punjab tried to emancipate women. The Sikh Gurus became social reformers, acknowledged the importance of woman and voiced their opinion against the prejudices of society like child marriage, sati system, purdah, enforced widowhood and others.

After the annexation of Punjab by the Britishers in 1849, various changes occurred in the modern era of the Punjab. The Board of Administration was formed by the Britishers and they started working for their vested interests which in return had some positive impact on the society of Punjab. Some socio-religious reform movements began to develop in Punjab during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and played a significant role in the history of Punjab. Singh Sabha, Namdhari, Arya Samaj, Kukas and others
raised voice for women emancipation. They all fought against social evils like sati system, female infanticide, child marriage, purdah system, widowhood, polygamy, prejudices against female education and many more. These social reformers opened various schools, colleges, gurukuls for girls in the different parts of Punjab.

Various accounts were also written during that time. But it is only in the nineteenth century that Indian women started attracting historians attention as objects of history and getting acknowledged in the historical accounts. The effects of the colonial period in Punjab were viewed by various historians and many historical accounts were written. Women history was given special notice and different ideologies emerged through the different historical works. Most of the writings of the missionaries, colonial administrators or social reformers were the narrative of women's slow but progressive march towards modernity following a period of stagnation. These accounts gave importance to women's biological differences, specification of their nature, the role played by them and categorized them into a single strata irrespective of their class, caste and hierarchies of their age. Attention was not paid to regional and cultural specifications of women which define women's life and their experiences. Only those women were picked or mentioned whose accomplishments were considered remarkable of recording from the male point of view.
Only those issues were taken into account which were vital from the male point of view. The early works revolved mainly around the issues like sati, infanticide, child marriage, widowhood, polygamy, polyandry and the education of women. The primacy was given to only those selective aspect of women's life which formed the agenda of socio-religious reform movements and other issues like print media, occupation, public participation, Punjabi women's role in the freedom struggle and others were sidelined. Thus the present dissertation is mainly concerned with other issues like the importance of print media, occupation, formation of organisations and associations, public participation of women in colonial Punjab from 1901-1947.

The Britishers and the reformers started using print media to make people aware about the condition of women. And the vernacular press of Punjab was the first public self expression of women's ideas and opinions and a rich medium through which the conflicts and ambiguities about the role of women in the society and nation were traced out. A concerted effort was made by the vernacular press especially magazines, journals and newspapers through their editorials, articles, essays and others to motivate and encourage women who were having a segregated existence in the society. All these magazines and newspapers were extremely critical of the prevalent evils, social customs of child marriage, inhuman treatment of widows, female illiteracy, purdah system and sati pratha. They
linked social reform with its comprehensive agenda of revolution. The readership of these magazines was not limited to Punjab only but also outside Punjab as regular articles were published of the contributors residing in Burma and other places.

The contribution of nine magazines and journals such as *Azad Bhain, Istri, Istri Rattan, Istri Samachar, Istri Satsang, Istri Sudhar, Phuleran, Punjabi Bhain* and *Sughar Saheli* have been discussed in this dissertation. The main aim of these was to cultivate the minds of women and to make them conscious of various social evils and political events occurring in the society. The major issues and themes such as female education, purdah system, widow remarriage, sati system, child marriage and women trafficking were discussed in these magazines and newspapers. Female education was given importance and stress was laid on the domestic household work for girls in the early decades of 1900s.

The print media had significant impact on gender relations and encouraged the re-examination of women's roles and place in society. Right conduct for women and control over their sexuality were viewed as hallmarks by the contributors of the journals and newspapers along with emphasis laid on the development of women through the mode of education. Regular articles and editorials were published regarding the importance of female education. A new woman was portrayed through the columns of these modes of print media. A new
woman-educated, free from the shackle of purdah, accomplished in domestic skills, devoted to the husband and family, an intelligent companion, an ideal mother, producer and nurturer of a strong masculine race and custodian of tradition, was portrayed through the columns of these newspapers, journals and magazines.

Female education was one of the most important issue sculpting the new woman and also for defining the limits of her modernity. Earlier the women were asked to be given strictly supervised limited education to enhance their abilities and accomplishments in the domestic arena but in the later issues of 1930s onwards stress was also laid on the women's economic independence and participation in the public sphere. The articles and editorials published regularly debated on the curriculum of the education for girls. The Britishers wanted the same curriculum for boys and girls whereas social reformers laid emphasis on separate curriculum along with separate schools for girls and boys.

The vernacular print media tried to raise the public consciousness about women's appropriate behaviour, attitude and position in society and the role education was to play in the sculpting of that role. This medium also motivated women to write articles about various social evils pertaining to women in the society. Women even started their own journals like Istri Rattan and others and tried to cultivate the minds of the fellow sisters and mothers in the society.
The press became a mode for different educational institutions to announce their scholarships for girls. New courses relating to the teacher training were also regularly published. Scholarships for girls in higher education were regularly published. Articles relating to the social evils were also published, people were appealed to leave their old orthodox thinking and matrimonials regarding the widows and widowers were advertised. Girl students even sent to the editors their poems mentioning the ill-effects of child marriage. The vernacular print media succeeded in its mission of transforming the consciousness that is self-image, world views, ideals, aspirations and goals of the urban Indian women especially of colonial Punjab.

The vernacular print media even made women to come out of their houses and participate in the various national and international conferences and meetings. Women were encouraged to write articles, poems and essays which were regularly published in these magazines. The women even started their own journals like Istri, Istri Sudhar and many more. Hence, the media led the women to think about themselves.

The print media played an important role in discussing the importance of female education. After the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849, vast strides were made in the field of education. Earlier education for girls was mainly religious and traditional. But
during the colonial rule, this education got transformed into the professional education and a journey from education to occupation was crossed by the women.

After the formation of the Department of Public Instruction in Punjab in 1856, the major obstacles in the field of education of girls were discussed – the conservatism and prejudice of the people, purdah system and child marriage. The Britishers further took steps of opening co-education schools and then separate schools for girls. They even invited missionaries to open schools, firstly, due to lack of teachers, secondly for the spread of Christianity. The second excuse made social reformers of Punjab conscious and due to this they started opening their own schools for girls. The social reformers welcomed the British policies with open arms which were suitable to them. But when the government favoured the same curriculum for the boys and girls, the debate was initiated between them and the reformers. The notion of purity and religious education and the home bound nature of womanhood were integral aspect of reformers where as Britishers not only wanted domestic education for the girls but also favoured them to be aware of their society and surroundings.

The government tried to examine the measures which were to be taken to promote primary, secondary, college and technical education for the girls. Provincial government; Local bodies, District and Municipal boards; and private agencies were allied in the
administration of the girls' schools. The efforts of three groups – the British rulers, Indian male reformers, and educated Indian women promoted female education and literacy became as the parameter for weddings. Rich and higher classes wanted to educate their girls as the education became eligibility for their marriages, on the other hand, the poor and middle class people needed bread winners for their family.

The journey from education to occupation by the girls in Punjab was crossed. When the girls stared studying in order to do jobs later on, then importance began to be laid on the skilled education. Hence, the emphasis was laid on medical, legal, teaching, and other professions. New teacher training institutes were opened by the government in the form of Normal schools and the reformers also started teacher training courses in their respective schools like in 1914 Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya of Ferozepur started teacher training courses. The Britishers also took steps regarding medical aid and education and opened many medical colleges in the different parts of India. Entrance exams were conducted by the government for admission in medical and law colleges.

The education made the women enlightened and they joined new professions and some of them also used print media to discuss their viewpoints. The education and occupation made women to achieve a high and equivalent status to men in the society.
The educated men and women in late nineteenth and early twentieth century started establishing their new organisations and associations for the women emancipation. The educational experiments of the government and reformers produced a "new woman" with interests that were beyond the household. The main objectives of their associations was to make society evil free and gave special attention to the female upliftment.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan of Amritsar was established in 1902 to promote the spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, educational and economic welfare of the people. In 1903, Diwan’s weekly newspaper *Khalsa Advocate and in 1905 The Monthly Circular of Chief Khalsa Diwan* was started to make the organisation successful and to react to masses. The Central Khalsa Anathalaya was established under the Diwan to give shelter to the orphans. The girls of orphanage were sent to different schools in Punjab for getting education. The Central Vidwa Ashram for the welfare of widows was also established where they were imparted technical and vocational education. The Sikh Educational Conferences were also conducted annually by the Diwan from 1908. From 1908 to 1947, thirty three sessions of the conference were held and all the issues dealing with female education were regularly discussed.

The Youngmen Sikh Association in Punjab was established by Bhai Sunder Singh Majithia and Bhai Vir Singh. The association, through its journal, *The Khalsa Youngmen’s Magazine* discussed the
ill-effects of social evils pertaining to women. The Bhujangan council of Kairon was working with the Chief Khalsa Diwan and was headed by Bibi Livleen Kaur and Bibi Milap Kaur. *Bhujangan Pattar* was a monthly journal of the council and various tracts, books and poems were published by the council. It also organized the Sikh Istri Conferences on regular basis whose membership was only open to the females. Here the women used to present their papers on education, cleanliness, child hygiene and others.

The All India Muslim Ladies conference worked on the same concept of female emancipation. Even the national level organisations like the Indian National Congress, the All India Women Conference, the Bharat Stree Mahamandal worked for the women, some of them opened schools for girls and started their journals having sometimes female editors.

These organisations made women of Punjab to come forward and they began to communicate with their counterparts outside their families and local communities. These later became a platform for the women to participate in public life and the freedom struggle for India.

As the new organisations were formed by the men and women for emancipation of the weaker sex, so the weaker sex remained no more weaker and started putting forward their own demands, needs and ideas in the society. Thus the public participation of the women gained momentum. The organisations established witnessed
commendable presence of women in almost all the sessions of conferences held in the different parts of Punjab.

The sessions of the Sikh Educational Conference from 1908 to 1947 witnessed the active participation of women. Women were enrolled as members, fellows, delegates and visitors. The women initially started participating in these conferences as mere visitors and then began to present their papers and finally even started to initiate the resolutions for women emancipation in the conferences. At the end of 1947, the women delegates were even successful in attaining special sitting arrangement in the sessions and girl students regularly represented their respective schools. They came into contact with the women of other provinces and communication gaps were further reduced.

The Sikh Women Conferences were organised by the Bhujangan Ashram of Kairon. The female participants laid stress on the society free from all sorts of useless superstitions, black magic, fasts, and other old customs and traditions which the ladies were following. The topics on the child care and healthy life were also debated. Some of the participants were pro-British and used to thank the government for their advantageous policies for girls in terms of education and eradication of social evils. The royal women of the different princely states like Nabha, Patiala, Jind and others were the patrons of the conference.
The All India Women's Conference was first organized in 1927 at Poona. The women of Punjab also participated in the twenty sessions of the conference from 1927-47. The participation was so important that one of the session of the conference was held at Lahore in 1931. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur of Kapurthala was a very active participant from Punjab in the conference. The conference was also presided once by a Muslim lady of Punjab – Lady Abdul Qadir of Lahore in 1933. Sarla Devi Chaudharani also represented Punjab and initiated various resolutions during the period of freedom movement in India. The organisation when formed was initially educational but with passage of time it even started discussing the political events occurring in India. The All India Women Conference not only encouraged the women of Punjab to open new schools and worked for female education but also initiated the women members to participate in the nationalist struggle. It urged them to adopt the constructive programme of Gandhi as to use swadeshi products and made them politically active in the society.

The Punjab Branch of the conference under Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru along with Mrs. B.L. Rallia Ram, Begum Shah Nawaz, Mrs. B.K. Singh, Mrs. Vidya Puri and others discussed the issues relating to food situation in the country, Hindu succession Bill, the condition of orphan children, social evils, need of female teachers, doctors and others. They even demanded high offices of the government for the ladies like in the Department of Education, Health and many more.
The women from Punjab also participated in some of the sessions of Indian National Congress and went to the different venues of the sessions. Women of other provinces also came to Punjab to enlighten their fellow sisters like Sarojini Naidu, Kasturba Gandhi, Muthulakshmi Reddi and others.

The active women were even appointed as parliamentary secretaries and were elected to the Punjab Legislative Council. Shrimati Lekhawati Jain (the first elected lady member of the Punjab Legislative Council), Mrs. Jahahara Shah Nawaz, Mrs. Duni Chand, Shrimati Raghbir Kaur were the few other elected members. The most important consequence of this public participation was that it cleared the way for the women of Punjab to show presence in the nationalist movement of India. They courted arrests, did picketing, went on hartals and raised slogans of independence.

The national leaders of India and the freedom fighters of Punjab also appealed to the women to participate in the freedom struggle along with the representation in the organisations and associations. On the appeals of their fellow partners, the women of different communities and from all walks of life came out to join the struggle, marches and demonstrations, as constructive workers, participating in and often taking charge of the village reconstruction programmes, as workers in the cause of social, economic justice and working for the removal of social evils and other forms of social oppression.
Politics completely altered the goals and activities of the organized women. Education, social reform and women's rights appealed to some progressive women but the movement to rid the country from its foreign rulers attracted people from all classes, communities and ideological persuasions.

In the present thesis, the participation of the women of Punjab in the nationalist movement from 1901-47 is divided into five phases from 1901-10, 1911-20, 1921-30, 1931-40 and 1941-47. Only important events are discussed and women participation is analysed.

From 1901-10, some of the women of Punjab mainly participated in the reformative works. They started their journals with emphasis on highlighting women issues. But when there was partition of Bengal in 1905, it infused a new spirit of patriotism in the Punjabi women and motivated them to enter political arena. The women organised meetings and collected funds for the victims of the Bengal partition and the participation was more or less passive in nature.

The second decade 1911-20 saw the most crucial change in the political participation of ladies. During the first World War, many Punjabi women favoured the recruitment of their sons, husbands as soldiers. Even vernacular journal like Bhujangar Pattar supported the British policies and appealed for more and more recruitment in the army. But the Jallianawala Bagh Tragedy of 1919 gave a great shock to the people of Punjab and indirect victims of that incident were
mostly the women. So immediately after that women got infuriated and started openly propagating against the government. Hence Jallianawala Bagh Massacre gave an impetus and acted as a catalyst in creating women consciousness for the struggle of freedom.

The entry of Mahatma Gandhi and the Jallianawala Bagh tragedy of 1919 made women of Punjab to directly participate in the Non-cooperation Movement of 1920-22. They held the meetings, led the processions, boycotted foreign goods, adopted the slogan of swadeshi and indulged in the picketing of foreign cloth shops and liquor shops. Sarla Devi Chaudhrani, Parvati Devi of Kamalia, Puran Devi, Gauran Devi, Mrs. Duni Chand, Kumari Lajjavati, Lado Rani Zutshi were the few names who participated in the movement of 1920-22.

The participation of 1920-22 was a sort of training programme for the future Satyagraha programmes of 1930-34 and 1940-42. Women's participation in Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-32 differed quantitatively and qualitatively from their involvement in the early 1920s and won them a place in history. As the Dandi March was initiated by Gandhi in 1930, women of Punjab inaugurated the movement by taking out processions, prabhat pheris and holding meetings. Regular processions were led by women like in Lahore the life and soul of the movement was Lado Rani Zutshi, Parvati Devi, Kartar Kaur, Atma Devi and many others. As the women were
participating in all these activities of the campaign, the government also started arresting these women participants. In the year 1932, that is, in the mid of the movement the number of women convictions in Punjab was gradually increasing and on average ten women were convicted every month.

Before the last phase of the struggle 1940-47, many of the women in Punjab were members and some were even leaders of the student associations (Lado Rani Zutshi in Lahore), and other political movements. In the individual Satyagraha and Quit India Movement of 1942-44, a large number of the women participants led demonstrations and courted arrests. Rameshwari Nehru, Lekhawati Jain, Savitri Devi and many others were imprisoned. In this movement, even girl students did not lag behind. In Amritsar, about three dozen young girls hoisted the tri-colour flag on 2 October, 1942. Luxmi Arya of Rohtak went from place to place and carried the message of boycott of the government from door to door hiding at her personal risk to avoid detention.

The women of Punjab in the nationalist struggle for freedom fought alongside men and suffered the same consequences as the men. These activist women were so caught up in this struggle, that they ignored gender issues or put them aside until independence had been achieved.
To sum up, we may conclude that the thesis primarily analyses the role played by the vernacular print media, female education, especially, professional, associations and organisations formed by them and their male counterparts in creating awareness amongst women and paving the way for female emancipation. The articles and editorials published in the vernacular press encouraged women to get education and enlighten themselves against the prejudices in the society. The enlightenment of women paved the way for them to adopt new professions especially in the field of law, medicine and teaching. As the women came out of their homes, new organisations and associations were established by them and their male counterparts for their further emancipation. Women played a positive role in these organisations and voiced their opinion on the various issues pertaining to them. These confident women then openly entered public life and national movement. As a consequence there is a marked difference between the woman of 1901 and 1947. As the thesis covers only the British Punjab, it would be interesting to study the role and status of the women in the princely states of Punjab which requires further investigation and research.